The Spectator EXTRA

First published as Hamilton Life in 1899

Hamilton College, Clinton, New York | March 6, 1995 | Volume XXX- Extra

Trustees announce Res. Life decision

Private societies lose houses, College to open new residence halls

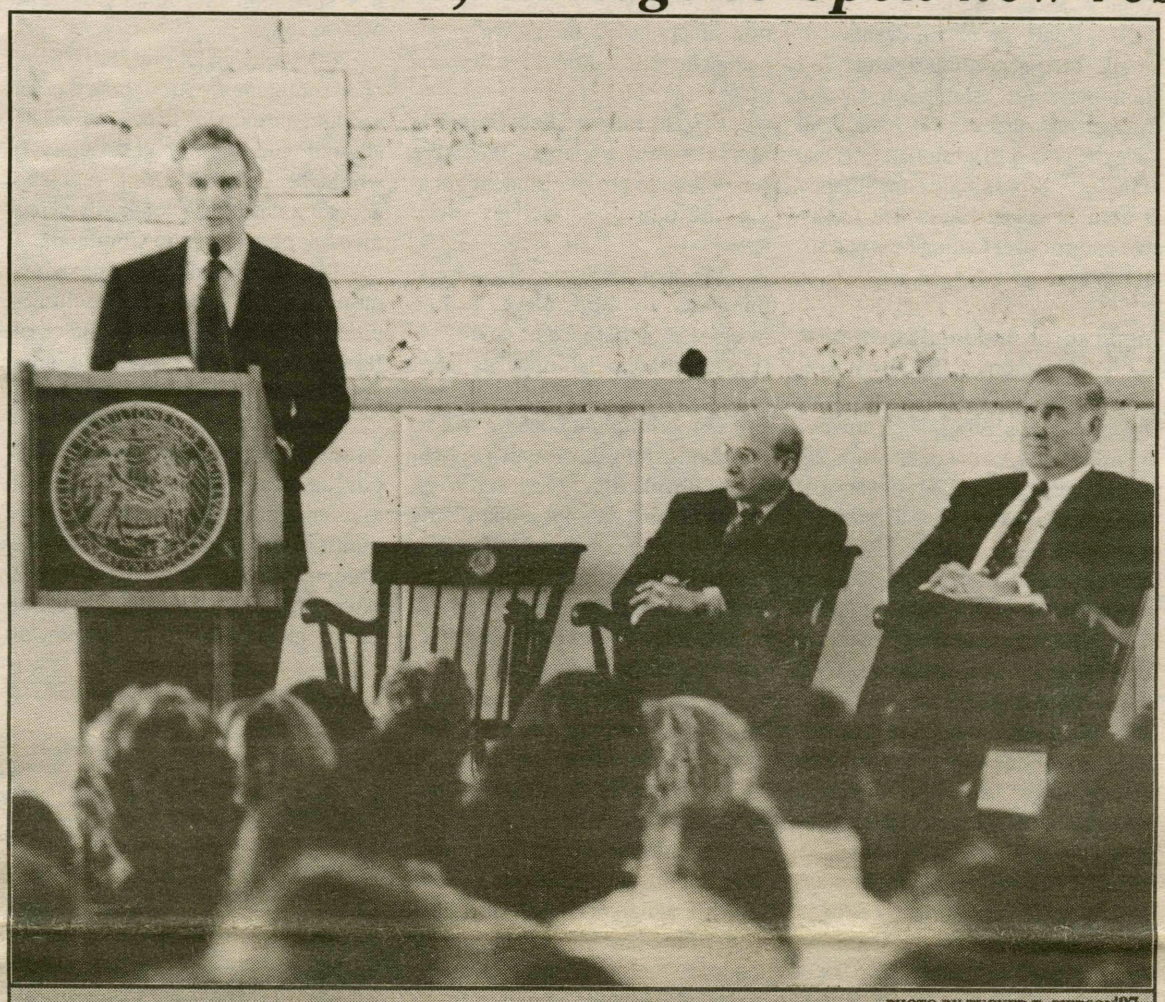


PHOTO BY TUCKER T. PIERSON'97

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Kevin Kennedy '70, President Eugene Tobin, Stuart Scott '61 (left to right) announce the Residential Life decision to the Hamilton community Saturday morning in the Alumni Gym.

Emotions run high at trustees' announcement

BY GABRIEL MEYER '96
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nearly one thousand students, faculty, and administrators rose early Saturday morning to hear the announcement of the results of the recently concluded Residential Life Study. The study was conducted by the Hamilton College Board of Trustees during the last two and a half years. Chairman of the Board of Trustees Kevin Kennedy '70 described the recommendations as "an attempt to make Hamilton a much more exciting and attractive institution."

The announcement, held in the Alumni Gymnasium, began with brief remarks from Kennedy, who outlined the trustees' recommendations. This was followed by an hour long question and answer session.

Emotions among students ran high during the announcement, with comments and questions being interrupted by frequent rounds of applause and the occasional sounds and hissing. Some muffled booing could be heard as Kennedy announced that effective next semester, all students will be required to live on campus and fraternity members will no longer be allowed to live in their houses. This move will affect more than one hundred students.

Other highlights of the trustees' recommendations included plans to renovate and move students into the College owned Saunders Home, the Root Farmhouse, the Theta Delta Chi (TDX) house, and the recently acquired Rogers Estate by the beginning of next semester. The recommendations also called for more flexible meal options. Under the new residential life plan, set to take effect next fall, McEwen Dining Hall will remain open throughout the day and all students will be required to participate at a minimum, in a five meal per week program. All students will be expected to eat lunch on campus, and faculty will be encouraged through the institution of subsidized meals and renovations in Commons Dining Hall, to eat with them.

Kennedy noted that the recommendations were not influenced by Hamilton's recent decline in *U.S. News and World Report's* annual college rankings.

Chairman of the Residential Life Committee Stuart Scott '61

*please see **Results** on page 4*

Summary of the trustees' report

COMPILED BY SCOTT KOCHER '97
NEWS STAFF WRITER

The following is a summary of the major points given by the Trustee Committee on Residential Life. For the official explanation regarding the future of residential life at Hamilton, please refer to the original publication presented by the Committee.

Hamilton College is a residential institution, which encourages and celebrates intellectual discourse. In order to assure the existence of an intellectual environment outside of classrooms, Hamilton's residential structure must be one that more fully integrates academic and residential life. At the same time, the College must provide equality of social and residential opportunity for all students, and offer a rich variety of on-campus activities that serve to encourage student involvement in campus life. Among the concerns of the Board of Trustees, over the past several years, have been private societies and the reputation of the College.

Though fraternities have played a significant role before and after the merger of Hamilton and Kirkland Colleges, many concerns were raised regarding their influence on residential, social, and academic life on campus. The inability of new organizations to raise sufficient funds to construct houses has meant that male society members, making up less than 20 percent of the entire student population, control social life on the Hill. In some instances, fraternities have become under-supervised and under-funded, causing them to fall into disrepair. And socializing, where alcohol is served, has extended into the academic week, causing concern that academics are being substituted for parties.

Of greater concern to the Trustees and the administration is that the reputation of Hamilton is shown to

*please see **Report** on page 2*

Announcement draws mixed reactions from fraternities, legal action possible

BY MATT NOLAN '98
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Following Saturday's release of the Residential Life Study results, there was a mixed reaction among the members of the various fraternities on campus. Many of the houses called meetings of their respective chapters this weekend, and Sunday afternoon the Inter Society Council met in a "huge" meeting to discuss the results.

While little is concrete at this point some of the fraternities have expressed an interest in possibly pursuing "legal action of some sort," while others plan to "work with the college" to make the transition smooth. Following a question and answer session with the trustees Saturday afternoon, many fraternity leaders felt that the college was being extremely unjust in it's handing down of the decision.

"I find it to be big brotheresque," stated Alpha Delta brother Steve Prymas '96 responding to the ultimatum given to the fraternities.

Sasha Kasanof '95 of Delta Upsilon also extended angry sentiments concerning the trustees' decision saying that the fraternity was "not at all happy with the decision." While the fraternity offered no official reaction he stated that the fraternity was not currently working with the college because they felt the college had failed to work with them.

Talk of the fraternities working together, and possibly pooling their resources in the future, is rampant as some see legal action as a distinct possibility. Much of the anger among fraternity members is in response to the fact that the college is attempting to bar them from using the property and houses to which some own the legal deeds. Many of the fraternities are currently planning to explore their rights in the situations at hand and prepare some type of response for the administration.

Unlike most of its counterparts, the Delta Phi fraternity is planning on taking a more congruous path in the wake of the survey results. Jason Kaczor '96 responded that without a house the fraternity was not affected as adversely as many of the others. He stated that the fraternity "would like to work with the college, to make the transition as smooth as possible." He also expressed relief at the fact that the system of Greek societies was remaining in place on the hill as the outcome "could have been much worse."

Sources have also reported the possibility of a counter proposal being formed by either members of the ISC or the Inter Society Alumni Council. Meanwhile fraternity life is moving along as pledging is expected to begin upon student's return from spring break.

The fraternity issue was just one part of the results of the study on residential life on the campus, but one that affected a large percentage of the population. Many of the brothers are optimistic as to the final outcome of the current and upcoming discussions with the administration. Yet Prymas admitted that his fraternity may have to "reshape it's plans for the future," in the coming weeks and months.

Inside This Special Issue

News.....Page 2
-How we compare with other colleges
-GLBSA holds "Kiss-In"
Letters and Op-Ed.....Page 6
-Reactions
-Editorial

Summary of the Report of the Committee on Residential Life

from Report on page 1

be suffering. The College is losing many of the better students in its applicant pool to comparable institutions. Students with higher ability are less favorably disposed to colleges where social life is dominated by private societies. The Committee recognizes that the College must take appropriate steps to readjust the balance of social and academic life so that Hamilton's reputation is primarily identified with academic rigor.

After many years of careful research of comparable institutions and discussions with students, faculty, alumni representatives, and prospective students, in January 1995, the Committee finally arrived at a general consensus about the problems and the solutions. It was agreed that the solution to both the equity problem and the alcohol problem lay in assuring equal access to residential space and prohibiting control of social spaces on campus by any individual organization.

General decisions

Four specific principles have been given by the Committee as a recommendation to the full Board. They are:

(1) All students will live in College housing, and all resident spaces will be available to all students. This will entail housing all students in a variety of settings designed to meet multiple needs and tastes. All students will have equal access to all residential options through a seniority-based lottery.

(2) All students will participate in one of the College meal plans. Students will be required to purchase a meal plan covering at least five weekday lunches. The new dining arrangement will be flexible and will encourage interaction among all members of the Hamilton community.

(3) Students will be permitted to continue to associate freely with one another and form student organizations, clubs, and groups, including private societies. No one group or organization will be given higher consideration when residential or social space is awarded.

(4) Space for social events will be allocated according to clear and equitable rules established by the College, and student government will have the power to administer the use of this space. No single constituency or student organization has exclusive control over College-owned social space.

Implications and implementation

The requirement that all students live in College housing precludes any off-campus living arrangements, including student use of existing private society houses. This means that the College must provide at least 200 additional beds on campus. Although this is a formidable task, the College will work towards providing sufficient living arrangements on campus for all students over the next several years, if not sooner.

The Committee recommends that the College create several new and attractive small-group living units that meet current students' interests in smaller, more home-like living spaces with access to a kitchen. Equity would be assured by allocating all spaces through the seniority-based lottery process, and blocks of up to 12 students would continue to be permitted.

Among the residential options which would become available to students this fall:

(1) The Rogers Estate will provide residents with informal access to and special responsibilities for distinguished guests of the College, lecturers and performers, who would be housed at the Estate during their visit.

(2) The Root Farmhouse, the Saunders Home, and Griffin Road Apartments will all be renovated for student occupancy in September, and will provide students with the option of preparing their own meals using kitchen facilities in each apartment.

(3) The former Theta Delta Chi house would undergo extensive renovation to provide student housing and dining, as well as social space.

(4) Private Society Houses, if purchased by the College, will be integrated into the community as they become available, and as determined by students and faculty.

(5) Additional housing will be provided in dormitories such as Babbitt, Milbank, Bundy East and West, and Dunham, without jeopardizing attractive and comfortable residential accommodations.

(6) Dunham residence hall will be renovated to provide more attractive residential spaces.

(7) The College will establish a task force to explore the possibility of special interest housing that would be governed by existing housing principles.

Dining has also been targeted as an important characteristic of College life which must be redesigned. The following initiatives are intended to meet the expressed dining needs of students and faculty.

(1) All students will be minimally required to purchase a five-day meal plan, and faculty and staff will be encouraged to join students during the lunch hour, the "Common Meal."

(2) Commons Dining Hall will be renovated to provide private dining spaces and to encourage students and faculty to eat their meals together. In particular, the upper balcony of Commons will be extended to provide a second floor, transforming the space from a cafeteria to a dining hall with significantly improved acoustics, small conversational areas, and private rooms.

(3) McEwen Dining Hall will be open continuously throughout the day and into the evening to accommodate student and faculty schedules. It would be utilized during lunch to accommodate those not involved in a meeting or program in Commons.

(4) The number of meals required in each meal plan would decrease with class year and choice of housing, to allow for increased independence.

Social opportunities will continue to play an integral part of campus life. In supporting the significant number and variety of social opportunities currently sponsored by the Campus Activities Board (CAB) and other campus organizations, the Committee recommends the creation of new spaces where individuals and organizations may host events. It proposed a number of projects to be completed during the summer.

Such projects include the renovation of Bundy Dining Hall into an on-campus pub. In addition, first floor lounge of Bristol Campus Center, Commons Dining Hall, and the basement of the TDX house will provide spaces where students can host events which include alcohol. To support the new social centers the College will work to increase the number of visits by widely recognized and provocative speakers, touring bands, high profile entertainers and comedians, and other distinguished guests.

The recommendations put forth here by the Committee are intended to provide students with new opportunities for governance, housing and programming campus activities. For this residential environment to become a reality, everyone must accept mutual responsibility for Hamilton's future successes. Ultimately, the atmosphere should become more attractive to the high quality students which the Committee seeks.

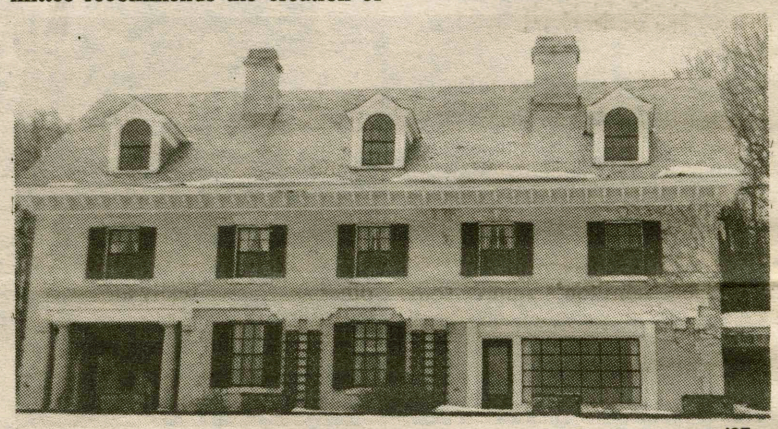


PHOTO BY GABRIEL CID '97

The house at the Rogers Estate will be renovated to provide space for students and guests of the College by next fall.

Student reaction to the Residential Life decision mixed

By Adeline Cook '95
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

On an unusually sunny March day, the results of the Residential Life Study were announced to an over-packed Alumni Gym. Student reactions to the changes slated for this September were quite mixed. "I'm mad as hell" announced Bill Murphy '96 when he heard the decision of the trustees. Yet sophomore Greg O' Connell '97 found it "a good decision overall. It's the sort of dynamic action this campus needed!"

After a period of mounting tension in the last two months, students seemed rather confused by the study's outcome. Most were unsure how to react to the apparent compromise the trustees made. The reaction to the new living spaces allocated to the students was, in general, quite favorable, whereas the reaction to the restriction of private societies was fairly negative.

Many students expressed their concern that the students would be given too little space for social activities in the new plan. "I'm going to have no social life now," remarked Gretchen Randall '98. Randall was concerned that the new arrangement would put even greater pressure on societies to have "invite-only" parties. At the announcement, many voiced fears that the Committee had not allocated enough space in which the eleven campus societies could organize events.

Other students expressed concern that the trustees had not fully considered their actions. "If this was a Res Life study, why did they [the trustees] not [get] ... more input from the Res Life Office" asked resident advisor Joe Iuorno '95. "It's ridiculous that they expect to renovate those buildings in six months!" noted Jennifer Hess '96. Nadia Fuller '98 was also skeptical about the new houses: "Where are we going to live? It was too crowded this year."

Many students were very upset about the possibility that the new construction could increase tuition or add costs in other ways. As Lori Eaton '96 said, "They've gotten rid of HEOP and maybe TAP and they want me to pay *how* much more money now?"

Students were also upset with the actual announcement of the results. Eaton remarked, "they avoided the questions, I felt like they weren't giving straight answers." Joan Duffie '98 was angry that the plans were not clearly defined. "How can the trustees come to us without concrete plans? I'm really annoyed!"

Society members were, as expected, unhappy with the announcement. Murphy, a Delta Kappa Epsilon member asked, "how do they have the right to regulate what I do off-campus? The trustees are kind of out of touch." Murphy also expressed concern over the actions of the Res Life committee (of which he is a member) now. "I feel really helpless and crippled [in organizing the housing lottery for this year.]"

Amid the general surprise and confusion on a campus bracing for the workload that inevitably precedes Spring Break, the students seemed primarily shocked and frustrated. But as Hess noted about the announcement, " I don't think it was a bad decision. Hey, they could have abolished everything!"

Res. Life: Hamilton vs. other institutions

By Meghan Hallock '98
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Hamilton College is entering a new era concerning residential life and enrollment. Other colleges like this institution have already implemented similar plans.

One of the first liberal arts institutions to eliminate private societies was Colby College in 1983. Amherst College was soon to follow in 1984. Other institutions have not been so extreme as to abolish private societies. Bowdoin College required their societies to go co-ed in 1991 as did Middlebury College in 1990.

Kenyon College implemented a new housing policy that gave inclusive membership groups highest priority in the housing lottery.

Two schools have kept private societies after the completion of a residential life study. Wesleyan College endorsed an all-male residential fraternity system in 1987 with the Residential Life Task Force. Colgate University, our nearby neighbor, decided to keep fraternities while also changing other aspects of residential life.

All of these institutions are higly selective institutions like Hamilton. Amherst and Williams are two colleges that many of our prospective students also apply to. Some of the considerations that formed the residential life decision were feedback from students who were accepeted to Hamilton but decided to attend college elsewhere.

These students, some of the top applicants in the country, felt that the atmosphere that fraternities created on campus was negative and thus a major factor in their decision not to attend Hamilton. This sentiment was especially prevalent among women applying to Hamilton.

The residential life changes are hoped to attract more top quality candidates to Hamilton. Rit Fuller, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid said, " Without question, this will be in the best interest of the college in recruiting the best students, male and female. I think the deliberations of the Res. Life Committee and the Board of Trustees were incredibly detailed and it was obvious to me the passion the Board feels for the college. Our office looks forward to conveying this new direction to guidance counselors and students across the country."

Changes are also being planned for First-Year Orientation. The Orientation week is now held the week before classes begin in the fall. A proposed change is being made to hold the Orientation in the late spring.

GLBSA stages Saturday morning "Kiss-In" outside Alumni Gym

Event follows a week of activity and mobilization for the organization

By Meghan Hallock '98
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual Student Alliance (GLBSA) held a "Kiss-In" outside the Alumni Gym on Saturday, March 4. The demonstration was held prior to the Residential Life decision, which was announced at 10 am. Student members, and supporters of GLBSA, lined the steps leading up to the athletic center. Students going to the gym for the announcement concerning residential life at Hamilton were greeted by these students reading statements in support of gay rights, with each statement followed by the group kissing.

The "Kiss-In" followed a week of high publicity for GLBSA. There has been a raging debate in the Alumni Review over a previous "Kiss-In" held in the Fall of 1993. Also, the GLBSA office was broken into and derogatory statements were written in the GLBSA office. The organization marched through the dining halls and the Bienecke Student Activities Village to protest the homophobia they see and experience on the campus. The group has also mobilized through flyers and the hanging of pink triangles around the campus to show support for their cause.

There were forty-three students originally involved in the rally. By the end of the "Kiss-In", there were approximately sixty people involved. Jackie Keegan '95, one of three co-cordinators of GLBSA, said that the rally was exciting but nerve-wracking. The feelings surrounding the residential life decision added to the anxiety the demonstrators had. But as the "Kiss-In" progressed, she felt that people were enjoying themselves. She said that the experience of kissing and reaffirming their rights in front of the school was truly exciting.

Keegan believes that the group received much support and that there were no direct attacks made on the group. She said that, "This indicates a change at Hamilton. Hamilton is still a nervewracking, and down right scary place to be "out", though. People's opinions are definitely changing, as they can see a group of people at a 'Kiss-In' and let us be."

Students were largely ambivalent about the demonstration. Chrissy Shuart '95 said about the rally, "It doesn't bother me." Kathleen Knoll '98 echoed that sentiment by stating, "It doesn't bother me. They have every right to." There were some dissenters amongst the crowd though. One anonymous first-year stated, " I think it is obnoxious. I respect their rights and I feel their opinion needs to be voiced, but I feel today is not the day to do it."

The "Kiss-In" was scheduled on the day of the announcement because of the high visibility. Students were confronted with the issue rather than, "just brushing aside the flyers because they were not interested," as Keegan stated. She felt that this type of rally forces people to listen and learn.

Keegan and the other two GLBSA coordinators, Jeffrey Spahn 95' and Caroline Thomas '95, voiced their opinions to Kevin Kennedy '70, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, about the lack of multiculturalism on campus. Keegan said, "We want to change Hamilton from a place where only one type of person is valued." They were concerned as to whether or not the residential life decision addressed more than the private society issue and would restructure multicultural planning and recruitment on campus.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL CID '97
Members of GLBSA staged a "Kiss-In" outside the Alumni Gym prior to Saturday morning's announcement of the residential life decision.

Students envision Hamilton's future

By Joe November '97
NEWS STAFF WRITER

The Report of the Committee on Residential Life promises to bring drastic changes to life at Hamilton College. There are many different views of Hamilton's future, some optimistic, others not. The main issue on students' minds before this past weekend was the private society issue and now, after the elimination of housing for societies, the issue is the future of private societies at Hamilton. The reactions were mixed.

Private societies and the future

The opinions of Hamilton's future social scene covers a broad spectrum. Russ Zacek '97 has a vision of a Hamilton with a "problematic social life." He cited over-supervision of students' lives and smaller, less open parties as the cause of future social problems at Hamilton. Greg Moscatel '97, class Representative and Delta Upsilon member, referred to what happened at Williams College when private societies were eliminated there. "A lot of people [at Williams] congregated in small 'drug-cultures' once societies were abolished." On a mixed note, he continued, "The dormitories will really improve, but only at the cost of a good social life." In addition, many students as well as faculty members foresaw a rise of drunken-driving incedents as societies declined in social prominence.

Some students had different views about the changes in Hamilton's social structure. One student, who wished to remain anonymous, viewed the changes in private societies from a psychological perspective. The student stated, "The decision will provide a refreshing break from the conformity societies bring to this school." The student added, "It will probably be a good experience for many society members since they can no longer hide behind their institutions and will have to put their personalities on the line." On a different note, Matt Brand '98 claimed, "In the future it will be much harder to label people with the names of the societies they belong to...we'll have to view each other as who we really are."

The elimination of fraternity housing starting next year has left students unsure of the future of private societies and their relation to the rest of the school. Rob Gieser '97, a Delta Kappa Epsilon pledge, said, "The houses are a major part of our identity and losing them will hurt, since...they have come to embody the spirit of fraternities here." A member of the TDX fraternity recalled the pain associated with losing their house, but he also stated, "We have essentially grown closer since then." Others also viewed the removal of housing privileges as a test of the unity for the societies. Most of the students interviewed felt that at least some of the private societies would not survive the transition.

Besides a difference in opinion between the two sides on campus, there were also overall trends of opinion amongst the four classes. With the exception of those who felt strongly either way about the private society issue, most of the seniors interviewed simply stated their gladness that they were not going to be here next year. One senior remarked, "I'm glad I won't be here next year when all the changes hit."

The first-years, again excepting the minority that felt strongly either way, were generally calm about the upcoming changes. Some first-years expressed regret that they were not involved in the Res-Life survey and that the fates of their social lives was in the hands of others. One first-year stated, "We'll just have to find alternatives to frat parties, but I haven't a clue what those alternatives are."

The sophomores and juniors were generally much more concerned with the decision than the other two classes. Students in the middle two classes reacted more sharply since they were the ones who had seen the old system and would be around to see the new system put in place.

One fraternity member described the attitudes of the fraternity members in the two middle classes, "We all worked hard to make societies what they are today and now we are having them pulled out from underneath us. Change will be very hard to accept for many." Others, however, welcomed change with open arms and saw Hamilton's future as bright because of the changes. One noteworthy trend was that most students, whether in societies or not, viewed at least some of the changes as positive and despite whatever personal problems they had with the decision, looked forward to their future at Hamilton. None of the sophomores or juniors interviewed mentioned transferring because of their disappointment in the results of the survey.

Next year's housing for all students

There is another perspective of the decision to eliminate off-campus housing, and that is the impact of simply having 200 more students on campus. Although the administration vows that there will be no housing "crunch" next year, there will be drastic changes. Currently, over 200 students live off-campus in either private societies or apartments. The school proposes to create new housing to accommodate the sudden 12.5% growth of the on-campus population.

At the present date, a large number of Sophomores and Juniors enjoy living in suites, but with the influx of Seniors arriving on campus in the fall, things will change. The upperclassmen will naturally want to live in Milbank or Babbitt suites when they are forced to live on campus. This means there will be much less room for underclassmen in suites. With less room in the suites, a sharp increase in competition will occur amongst juniors and sophomores to procure housing in dormitories like Carnegie and South. In fact, the upcoming Housing Lottery will prove to be much more competitive than last year's lottery due to a larger number of upperclassmen seeking rooms on-campus.

The school stands to make a good deal of money from the 200 extra people who will pay the school for housing starting next year. Since housing costs each student $2500 per year, the school can make as much as $500,000 with the students arriving on campus.

All students interviewed were optimistic about the renovations of the new housing and most wanted to able to live in the new housing at some point in their Hamilton careers. Many who admired the architectural beauty of some of the campus fraternity houses looked forward to living in them without having to belong to a society: One junior woman stated, "It always seemed unfair that the guys got to live in the nice houses while we had no such option."

People working in the dining halls expect to see more crowded meals in the future and a possible seating shortage in the dining halls. They emphasized that the quality of the food would not decline since most of it is produced *en masse*, but that lines in the cafeterias might be a little longer than they are now due to the influx of students.

Academics

Most administrators, students, and faculty look forward to the academic changes at Hamilton which were proposed by the study and elsewhere. Many feel that although the next couple of years are going to be rough due to a transition of the social structure, things will soon settle down and academics will genuinely start to improve here.

Most students felt that one of the positive benefits of the changes would be an improved academic reputation for the school. Rumors abound as to how much the school's *U.S. News and World Report* ranking will improve. According to the rumors, the school will improve anywhere from 3 to 11 places in the rankings. No factual evidence backs any of these rumors yet they persist.

One student, who was fed-up with the preoccupation of many Hamiltonians over the ranking issue, said, "The rankings are just an illusion. We should really be concerned about the quality of our college education, not what some dumb magazine thinks of us." Upon hearing this, another student responded, "The ranking is important, because with a high rank, we will attract better students and will become great again."

Thursday from 6 to 7 pm
on **WHCL 88.7 FM**
KILLZONE
will be broadcasting *LIVE*
from Café Opus.
Come by and voice your opinion on the air or at least listen to WHCL as Doc & Cary discuss the Res. Life decision with top administrators.

Administration outlines plans to implement Res. Life Study decisions

By Scott Kocher '97
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Students at Hamilton want to know how the Committee on Residential Lifeplans to implement uts recommendations. The following is a response to some questions that have been raised regarding the Committee's future plans. All information has been compiled from the Report and from comments by President Eugene Tobin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Kevin Kennedy, and Dean of Students, Jan Coates.

Q: How does the College plan to pay for the renovations, purchase of fraternity houses, and increased funding for campus activities?

A: The financial repercussions of the Committee's decision are, as might be expected, very significant. Perhaps the greatest concern among students is whether Hamilton's tuition will be affected. Gene Tobin has emphatically stressed that no change recommended by the Committee's report and related to the new housing proposals will increase tuition. The cost of attending Hamilton will be more affected by financial aid to needy students and faculty salaries than by the new housing proposals.

Kevin Kennedy explained that the implementation of the Committee's report on housing is composed of two phases. The first phase involves renovating additional residential space in the Rogers Estate, Root Farmhouse, Saunders Home, and Griffin Road Apartments by the next fall semester. The College hopes to borrow a short-term loan of $6 million in order to pay for these changes. Kennedy says that the Board of Trustees is "confident we can borrow the money," but that these changes will be "expensive." The second phase, in which Dunham will be completely renovated, will cost the College an estimated $7.5 million. The Board anticipates a total cost of its proposals to be approximately $20 million. If the College is unable to purchase the private societies from their national chapters, Kennedy acknowledges that the College will have to inquire into long-term financing to create the proposed social and residential space.

Q: Now that fraternities have no designated social space, and bulk alcohol will continue to be prohibited in residence halls, where can students go to have fun on campus while drinking alcohol?

A: There are several solutions to the question of alcohol currently being considered. In the Committee's report, one proposal is to transform Bundy Dining Hall into an on-campus pub administered by an off-campus vendor, with a dance floor, pool tables, large-screen television, quality sound system, and performance area with stage lighting. Establishment of a micro brewery on the premises is also under consideration. Further renovations include providing social space in the first floor lounge of the Bristol Campus Center, Commons Dining Hall, and the basement of the TDX house where students may host events that include alcohol. The College recognizes the social opportunities that have been provided by private societies in the past, and acknowledges students' need for events where alcohol may be served.

Q: What is the likelihood that the College will complete its renovations on time?

A: The Board of Trustees and the Administration recognize the difficult task ahead in completing all changes by the start of the fall semester. However, they anticipate that, if the changes are implemented as proposed by the Committee on Residential Life, the plans will be in place on time. Blueprints of the proposals to renovate residential spaces have already been drawn up by architects, and it is hoped that construction will begin as soon as possible. If adequate housing is not available by the fall semester, some students will be al-

please see Interview on page 5

Text of Kevin Kennedy's speech on Res. Life decision

The following is the text of the speech delivered by Chairman of the Board of Trustees Kevin Kennedy '70 on March 4, 1995.

Good morning and thank you for coming.

I'm Kevin Kennedy, a member of the class of 1970, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Hamilton College.

You all know Gene Tobin, President of the College. And I'd like to introduce Stuart Scott of the Class of 1961 and the trustee chairman of the Residential Life Committee, who is seated next to Gene.

My purpose today is to announce the results of the Residential Life Study. I will describe the plan that the Board adopted yesterday afternoon, give you some background for our decision and then open the floor for your questions. Let me make it clear that this decision has been made by — and is the responsibility of — the Board of Trustees.

The plan is based on four principles. Let me list the principles first and then go back and offer some explanation.

Principle Number One — Hamilton is a residential college. All students will live in College housing, and all residential spaces will be available to all students.

The Second Principle — Dining is an integral part of the residential experience because it provides an opportunity to build community and connect in-class and out-of-class activities.

Principle Number Three — The College will continue its tradition of permitting students to associate freely and form organizations.

And the Fourth Principle — The opportunity to utilize College-owned social space will be governed by rules and regulations established by the College.

In practical terms, this is what it means. The first Principle, that all students will live in College housing, precludes any off-campus living arrangements beginning in September. Since, as you know, private society houses are off-campus housing, that means student use of those houses will be discontinued effective with the start of the next academic year. While Hamilton has always been a residential college, students have been granted permission to live in private societies and other off-campus housing. The new plan clearly reflects the College's commitment to provide on-campus housing for all Hamilton students. This change will likely generate the greatest reaction, so let me spend a few minutes explaining our rationale.

While Hamilton has been a coeducational college for nearly two decades, our social structure is essentially the same as when nearly 90% of an all-male student body belonged to fraternities. Today what that means is that fewer than 20% of the current students virtually control the social life on the the Hill. Women students tell us time and again that they do not feel they have the same social and residential opportunities as their male classmates. They do not enjoy — and cannot afford to replicate — the privileges of residential fraternity life. More disturbing is evidence that this disparity is leading many prospective female applicants to seek their education elsewhere.

Meanwhile as you know, the fraternity houses themselves have been largely occupied by sophomore members, who in many instances are required to fill those house beds while upperclassmen choose residence hall space or housing in Clinton. This year was an exception due to the large number of upperclass students who sought to live off campus. But with limited budgets, sub-par maintenance and plain old age, many of the houses have become unpleasant dwelling places, leading some parents to complain and inquire as to whether the College is truly interested in the well-being of its students. The most disturbing result, however, has been increasing evidence that Hamilton is in danger of being perceived more for its social life than for its academic rigor — a perception that is hurting us not only with female applicants, but with males as well.

Is this situation entirely the fault of fraternities? No, it is not, which is in part why we rejected the option, taken by several of our peer institutions in recent years, of abolishing private societies. In fact, the Board recognizes and affirms the College's tradition of allowing students to associate freely, thereby permitting private societies to continue as non-residential social organizations.

We fully realize that restricting students from using their traditional fraternity houses as residences, dining halls and social spaces will be construed by some of you as *de facto* abolition. But the reality today suggests otherwise. Even without separate residences, four sororities are currently thriving on campus. And many junior and senior members of the fraternities, by their own choice, live somewhere other than in their houses.

Much of what I've said has necessarily focused on private societies. However, these changes are about building, and about improving our College. They respond directly to many of the needs you expressed in the surveys completed as part of this study, especially with regard to issues such as dining, housing and social alternatives. Let me give you a few examples.

Specifically, many of you told us you wanted housing options that were more like homes — single and double rooms with access to a kitchen and a living room. Beginning later this spring, we will renovate several College-owned structures adjacent to campus to create more small-group living units. Included in those plans are the Griffin Road Apartments, the farmhouse adjacent to the Beinecke Village, the former TDX house, and a 200-year-old farmhouse on the corner of College Hill Road and Griffin Road.

Of special significance is our intent to make the Rogers Estate — a 21-room home that sits on 61 acres on the ridge below the soccer and football practice fields — available for student housing. The 22 students who will live there will serve as hosts for distinguished visitors to the College, participating in receptions, dinners and informal discussions in the estate's first floor public area. The activity that will take place in that residence is a model of our vision for connecting learning both in and out of the classroom.

The new residential life plan also responds to your concerns by providing more flexible meal plans and greater access to kitchens. As part of the bidding process for the College food service provider, we're requiring that potential vendors take into account that beginning in September McEwen Dining Hall will be open continuously throughout the day. The result of these changes will be more flexibility in where and when you eat.

We're also planning to establish lunch as a meal where faculty, students and staff can come together as a community. All students, no matter where they live, will be expected to take their weekday lunches in either McEwen or Commons. Faculty and staff will be encouraged to join you at what we are calling the "common meal." Commons will be renovated to provide private rooms, small conversational areas and significantly improved acoustics.

We know you want party spaces where alcohol can be served. Three spaces will be available this fall, including the basement of the former Theta Delt house. Also we will create a new pub where students of all ages will be able to gather spontaneously in the evenings. We envision a pub with a quality sound system, staging for bands, a dance floor, a game room, and a lounge area.

Most of the new Residential Life system will be in place by the start of the 1995-96 academic year in September.

As you leave following the question and answer period, you're invited to pick up a copy of the Residential Life Committee's report. Many of the details of the plan are contained in this document and I encourage you to read it. The report will also be mailed to all parents and alumni, and will be delivered to all campus mailboxes Monday morning, accompanied by a letter from me.

Also as you leave, you will receive a listing of the times and places during the coming week when you will have opportunities to have your questions answered by President Tobin and others. Since we realize that this is a particularly busy time of the year for you, we're also planning a series of meetings after you return from Spring Break.

I want to thank Stuart Scott and the other trustees, students, faculty and administrators who worked hard to put this plan together. Early in the process, Stuart and his Committee colleagues set three objectives to guide their deliberations. These objectives, which are described in the report, were first, to integrate academic and residential life, second, to assure equity of social and residential opportunity for all students, and third, to create a richer variety of on-campus activities that encourage student and faculty involvement in the life of a residential college.

What they have provided, which the Board yesterday approved, is, for all its detail, only a blueprint. The real work of creating a new residential environment now falls to you, the students, faculty and administrators of Hamilton College. As Stuart and the members of his committee worked, they began to bring into focus a vision of Hamilton as a lively, creative — even a little chaotic — academic village. We are confident that you will construct for yourselves just such a village, a community that both protects what Gene Tobin so aptly describes as "our indispensible characteristic," which is our intellectual distinction, and enhances our reputation as a place that's exciting to be a part of.

The debate about private societies at Hamilton has a long history. The Committee and the Board of Trustees intend that this plan will end this debate as the College embraces non-residential private societies.

Those of us privileged to have attended this College never fail to marvel at the emotions it creates when we meet another Hamiltonian far from this Hill. Being a member of this small community somehow develops a deep loyalty that stems from the special experience that we've all been privileged to share. It is the vision of the Trustees that this plan will make Hamilton an even more special place.

Again, we would like to thank you for coming this morning, and we would be happy to take your questions.

Students question uncertainties of decisions' implentation and status of multiculturalism following release of study results

from Results on page 1

described the unanimous vote taken by the Board of Trustees on Friday to approve the recommendations as "achieving a census." He added that the recommendations were not modified in any way during the day's meetings, prior to the vote.

Anxious students await news

"I'm not nervous, but I'm anxious to hear what happens," said Barbara Upton '98 prior to the announcement, as she waited in line with other students for the doors of the gymnasium to open.

"I think there have been so many rumors going around that people just want to find out which one is actually true," said Tanya Pastra-Landris '98.

Questions following Kennedy's announcement addressed subjects ranging from newly available housing options to the status of multicultural students at Hamilton. President Eugene Tobin and Trustee Chairman of the Residential Life Committee Stuart Scott were with him on stage to help answer the questions.

"All of us on the hill look at the College as a totality," said Tobin of students' initial reactions to the trustees' recommendations as the question and answer period began. "We understand very much that change of any kind is disorienting. We appreciate the sense of disappointment in some circles and confusion in others."

Housing shortage possible

"You'll be living in some of the most innovative new housing any college campus has ever renovated," said Tobin in response to a question about housing options asked by Jared Bowling '96. He added that if a housing shortage does occur on campus next semester as a result of the closure of fraternity houses, students will be allowed to live off campus, though not in fraternity houses.

Kennedy later added, "We're talking about doing this without the [fraternity] houses at all. . . It's not clear that we will have space for all sixteen hundred students in the fall, but we should be very close, and we will have that space by the fall of 1997."

One first year student, who lived in a converted kitchen in the basement of Dunham Residence Hall at the beginning of last semester due to a temporary housing shortage, asked, "If you couldn't provide enough housing for myself last semester, what makes you think you can provide it next year? To me, that's ridiculous."

"I'm a former resident of Dunham myself and it's not a building I have any great affection for," answered Kennedy who added that he hoped the College can do a better job of providing adequate housing next semester.

"The fraternity houses are a very important part of this campus and they have been for a very long time," he said in response to a question about the future use of fraternity houses. "Obviously, some of that space is terrific residential space especially after it has been rebuilt." He added that the College intends to purchase the houses.

One senior drew a thunderous round of applause after she asked a question about the possible reinstatement of party forms and permitting bulk alcohol in residence halls. "I remember the fun parties we used to have in the dorms and that would lead to spontaneous things," she said.

Momentary booing could be heard as Dean of Students Jan Coates responded, saying there would be no change in the existing alcohol policy. She added that more areas will become available for consumption of alcohol beginning next year. These include Bundy Dining Hall which may be converted into a pub over the summer, as well as the basement of TDX, and the existing pub area in Bristol Campus Center.

In response to a question about blocking options for fraternity housing, Kennedy noted that the current blocking policy, which stipulates that no more than twelve students can form a block, will not change.

"Go back and do more planning"

Some students questioned what they felt was the vague nature of the trustees' recommendations, which Kennedy described as "blueprints" for future changes.

Senior Class President Tracee Plowell asked where the necessary new social spaces will be provided, following the closing of fraternity houses.

"Can you give for the first time in this whole presentation a concrete answer?" she asked. "Where will the space be? You've all said all day that you're not quite sure and I don't think that's fair. I couldn't go to the Dean of Student's Office and say, 'This is what I'd like to do for senior week, but I'm not quite sure how its going to work.' They would say, 'Go back and do more planning.'"

Stuart Scott said the reason for the uncertainty was the College does not own the fraternity houses and acquisition of them may take considerable time. "We don't know what resources we have available and we're not going to know for a while yet," he said.

Multicultural issues

Caroline Thomas '95 a leader of the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Student Alliance said, "We have spent last four years here trying to tell you what we need and what we want. You haven't been listening." She asked what would be done to alleviate fears of gay students who feel unsafe at Hamilton.

Kennedy replied that Hamilton is commited to integrating multicultural students into college life, emphasizing that the Board of Trustees' decision was based on the principle of equity for all students.

Tobin added, "We think that Hamilton College in 1996 and beyond will be the kind of community that makes it possible for us to recruit more of the kind of students that are on our campus now and create an environment in which all of our students feel increasingly comfortable.

Dean Coates noted in response to another question that the Keehn Co-op will remain in its existing form, though she noted that the Black and Latin Student Union house will no longer exclusively house students belonging to that organization.

Post announcement press conference

A small press conference followed the announcement of the Residential Life Study recommendations. When asked what the College would do if fraternities refuse to sell their houses to the College, Kennedy answered, "We won't buy." The cost of purchasing and renovating the houses, many of which are in serious disrepair, remains unknown.

Of the possibility of lawsuits aimed at preventing the College from mandating that fraternity houses be vacated, he said, "We hope that will not happen."

The renovation costs for the Saunders Home, the Root Farmhouse, Griffin Road Apartments, TDX, and the Roger's estate, included as part of the new residential life policy, will total $6 million.

"We do not anticipate that any of this will translate into a tuition increase," said Kennedy.

"We are extremely sensitive to the need for social space," he commented, adding that some of the soon to be ex-fraternity houses are well suited for the purpose. He described the social spaces to be provided initially under the new residential life program as "inadequate."

No change in decision

At an afternoon interview President Tobin stated the recommendations approved by the Board of Trustees will not be reconsidered. "There are certain principles we believe in firmly and they will not be changed."

"The first few hours after any decision will be tumultuous," he added, noting the discontent of some students.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL CID '97

Kendall Brook '96, a member of the Psi Upsilon fraternity, expressed his disappointment with the trustees' decision to close fraternity houses.

Tobin and Kennedy address plans to purchase fraternity houses, new structures may be built if sales cannot be negotiated

from Interview on page 4

lowed to live off campus, but not in private society housing.

Q: *Will the College be able to purchase private society houses?*

A: On Saturday afternoon, the Board of Trustees and representatives of private societies met and discussed their options. Afterwards, Kennedy mentioned that there was a "range of reactions" from the fraternity representatives, but the general tone of the meeting was "positive and constructive." For now, the Board and the Administration will do its best to convince representatives from private societies that the purchasing of the houses by the College will greatly benefit the community.

Neither Kennedy nor President Tobin have specifically addressed an issue of grave concern to many students: If private society houses are not purchased by the College, what will happen to them? The only word so far is that if the houses are not for sale, the College will have to build additional structures to fulfill its intention of providing alternative social spaces. The Board has stressed its conviction that purchasing the houses will be in the best interest of everyone at Hamilton, including students. The Board and private society representatives are scheduled to meet next Saturday in Syracuse to continue their deliberations.

EDITORIAL

More than mortar and brick?

The decision made by the Trustee Committee on Residential Life represents a turning point in Hamilton College's history. We believe that this decision reflects years of careful thought and consideration regarding the College's present social and residential needs. The report presented by the trustees is the result of discussions with students and alumni, a comprehensive evaluation of options available to the College, and extensive evaluations of other institutions.

We support the trustees' decision as a significant step in the right direction. However, there are many concerns which must be fairly addressed. Some feel that this decision is too drastic, and that the College has no right to regulate housing for private societies in the proposed manner. Litigation is certain to follow in coming months. But we must consider the intentions behind the trustees' decision. Hamilton College's first priority as an academic institution is to provide a true liberal arts education through an expansive learning environment, one which transcends classrooms by encouraging learning within the residential community. Therefore, it is in the College's best interest to create an environment where intellectual pursuits and equal social opportunity are emphasized.

Some may view the trustees' decision as inadequate, or even a non-decision. Private societies should have been abolished, they say. By not dealing firmly and decisively with one of the most long-standing, controversial issues on this campus, the trustees are certain to be forced to reconsider it in the future. Advocates of this view further argue that the continued existence of private societies on this campus will allow lingering ill-sentiment among fraternity members, who will continue to be recognized, yet begrudge the College for taking away their houses.

We do not share this view. We believe that students should be allowed to freely associate. We do not feel that the College has the authority to restrict this right. By granting recognition of private societies and organizations, the College is reaffirming its commitment to this right, allowing students to express themselves and shape their college experiences.

We believe that the trustees' planned continued recognition of private societies is an excellent decision. It is a plan that takes into consideration all aspects of the situation and is amenable to as many members of the Hamilton community as possible. In the structuring of a residential life plan, it is necessary to address the needs of a multitude of student interests. A college community that fails to do so breeds discontent and unrest. This would undermine Hamilton's strong educational atmosphere.

In adapting to the new residential guidelines on campus, it is imperative that students demonstrate their personal initiative and responsibility to the college. The trustees' decision provides an opportunity for private societies to reaffirm the ideals they claim to embrace. The new social structure will create a testing ground for the unity of students currently in societies. It will act as a crucible for fraternities to determine whether they are truly more than the mortar and bricks of their houses which they will lose.

The Spectator

Editor-in-Chief
Gabriel S. Meyer

Managing Editor
Eric L. Martin

NEWS EDITOR
Naeem Sheikh

ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITORS
Matt Nolan
Meghan Hallock
Jacob Stetser

LETTERS AND OP-ED EDITORS
Chris Albro
Larry McTiernan

SPORTS EDITOR
Samuel Walker

ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITORS
Brian Cohen
Trip MacCracken

FEATURES EDITORS
Marie Follayttar
Nadine Neue

ARTS EDITORS
David Townsend
Rubén Rivero

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS
Tucker Pierson
Gabriel Cid

EDITORIAL CARTOONIST
John Elliott

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Adeline Cook

BUSINESS MANAGER
Tracy Hildebrand

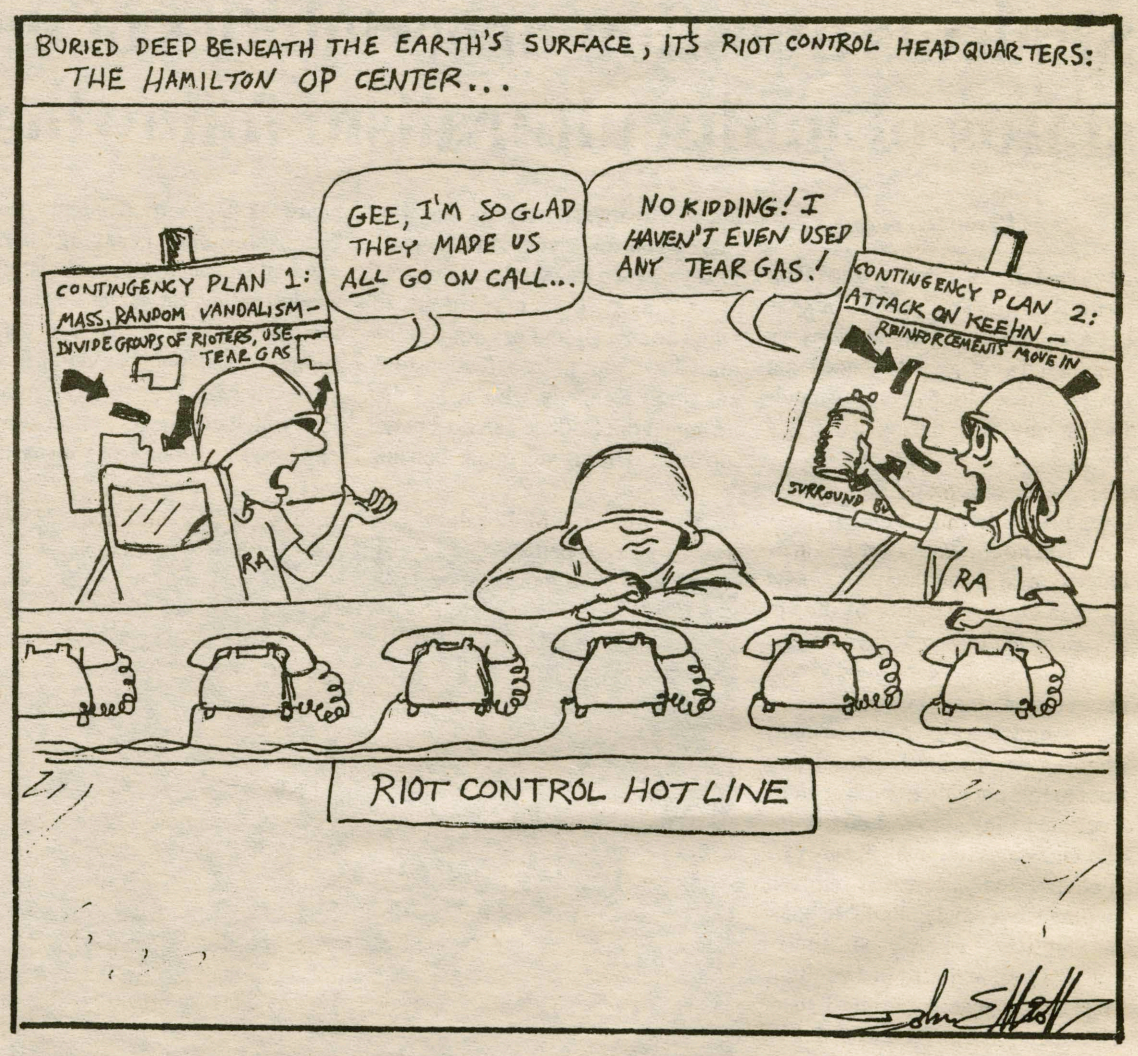
PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
Michael Mathres

CALENDAR EDITOR
Bari Altberg

COPY EDITORS
Kate Scovin
Mark Granovsky
Scott Kocher
Joe November

QUOTABLES AND PERSONALS
Josh Ribner

The Editorial represents the opinions of The Spectator *staff. The Hamilton College* Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Publications Board while classes are in session. Subscriptions are $22 per year. Our offices are on the third floor of Bristol Campus Center. The deadline for classifieds, personals, letters, and advertisements is Tuesday the week of publication. For further information, call (315) 859-4100.*


BURIED DEEP BENEATH THE EARTH'S SURFACE, ITS RIOT CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: THE HAMILTON OP CENTER...
GEE, I'M SO GLAD THEY MADE US ALL GO ON CALL...
NO KIDDING! I HAVEN'T EVEN USED ANY TEAR GAS!
CONTINGENCY PLAN 1: MASS, RANDOM VANDALISM - DIVIDE GROUPS OF RIOTERS, USE TEAR GAS
CONTINGENCY PLAN 2: ATTACK ON KEEHN - REINFORCEMENTS MOVE IN
RA
RA
RIOT CONTROL HOTLINE

Letters to the Editor

Continue to make Hamilton a positive experience

To the editor:

As I lay in my bed last night in my private society home, a feeling of sadness and history crept into my body. Thoughts ran through my brain at light speed as the reality of Saturday's decision settled into my consciousness. Perhaps what I felt most was that nobody would ever again sleep in my room and know why it is so important, why the building stands for so much. The feeling among fraternity members was morose...they took away our houses! I, like many other private society members, was shocked and depressed by this particular aspect of the Residential Life decision.

However, while I continue to digest what these changes mean, I did some inward reflection and discovered why I am at Hamilton. My society experience has been instrumental in my Hamilton happiness, but I would be nothing short of shallow if that was the only thing keeping me at this institution. The more I think about this decision, the more I realize that I am here because of the people, both at the student and faculty/administration levels. This college has given me so much in the past two years that high school now seems like an unimportant stage in defining my personality. I have learned volumes about myself, friends, responsibility, and independence in my Hamilton experience, and societies played, and will continue to play, a large part in that growth. But what I really want to convey both to myself and to all the members of our community is that Hamilton is too special a place to instantaneously become pitiful because we have to live in dorms. I do not think seniors who are 22 and 23 years old need to be living in suites instead of apartments, but we will and we should do so with a smile.

I urge everyone to discuss these changes fully, and to make the administration listen to what we have to say. But let us always remember that Hamilton is not about fraternity houses. And it is certainly not about fraternity parties. This college is about people, the way we learn to interact with one another, the process of learning about academics while we gather so much information about the game of life. If we adopt the outlook that this school is no longer fun, then it will not be. But if we accept the decision, however begrudgingly, as a roadway to a future that will continue to produce extraordinarily intelligent, articulate, and most of all happy students, then we should be just fine. I know that I will always feel slighted by this decision, but it is really only a blip in our college existence. There is too much else here to let a change made by trustees bring us down.

In short, please join me in demonstrating Hamilton solidarity. Complaining is inevitable, and I will do my fair share, but let us do it quickly and promptly so we can move on to more great things at this institution. Perhaps this decision is a way of restoring our excellent academic reputation in the eyes of the uninformed. Personally, I know that Hamilton students recognize that we are among the elite institutions in the world, and the changes presented on Saturday are merely a way to convince the outside world that we are amazing. Hopefully, the changes will continue to make this school more attractive to potentially brilliant high school students. As the guy on the Taco Bell commercial has stated so intelligently, "Change is good." Let us make the best of a decision we may not fully agree with. After all, McEwen will be open longer! If we dwell on "how it used to be" then we will find ourselves at a stagnated, uninteresting institution. But if we remember why this college is so wonderful, why our friends are so special, and why this school will continue to be a mind blowing experience for its students, then we will discover new and exciting things each and every day. Please join me in my optimism; not doing so simply puts us farther behind in our quest for joy and knowledge.

Mark Lilienthal '97

***The Spectator* thanks those who took the time to share their opinions with us and the Hamilton community...**

If you would like to contribute to The Letters and Op-Ed section, send letters to *The Spectator* through campus mail or call Chris at x-0652

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Residential Life Study reflects potential, not actual, student body

To the editor:

The recently released Residential Life Decision is the result of an extended investigation into the problems students face living at Hamilton College. To evaluate the committee's success in creating an intelligent and informed Residential Life Policy, we must examine how well the policy presents a solution to the problems the survey uncovered. In other words, the committee found something 'broken' about Hamilton social life and attempted to fix it. The question is whether or not they did a good job.

First we must establish what it is the committee found to be broken at Hamilton. There is a lot of rhetoric surrounding the need for change, so let us establish the facts before believing the speeches. I will address some of the commonly identified problems at Hamilton, and then evaluate which is the real issue the decision attempts to remedy.

Is this policy an attempt to encourage diversity and multicultural understanding? Perhaps on the surface it is. The 'common meal' is a token attempt to engender 'community' on the Hill, but the bulk of changes the survey enacts indicate that this was not a central issue. The policy still allows for block housing for societies and other 'theme' groups. It would seem that a theme group, for example block housing for Spanish speaking students, does more to encourage segregation than integration. Under this framework, students with the same interests stick together. They do not mingle. Multiculturalism would be much better addressed by structural and academic changes such as resurrecting foreign language requirements than by changes in residential policy. I think that we can therefore argue that integration, diversity and increased multicultural awareness were, at best, secondary issues for the committee.

Is the policy driven by financial concerns? Mr. Kennedy made a point of demonstrating that Hamilton College is not in any financial danger, and the renovations and likely legal battles this transition will entail indicate that the committee's decision was not based on money. This policy will require Hamilton to spend a lot of money, and possibly lose alumni support, so it is unlikely it is based on greed or budgetary necessity.

Is the policy designed to give students a better education and better prepare them for the 'real' world? The policy does not specifically deal with any academic issues like classes or requirements and therefore cannot be strictly construed as educational reform. Furthermore, by not allowing students to live in off-campus apartments the policy does more to insulate Hamilton students from the realities of American life. Apartments force students to deal with real issues such as bills, cleaning, trash and snow removal, etc. that they are not forced to address in the residence halls. In a direct sense, therefore, the policy does nothing to better education or increase preparation.

Is the policy aimed at improving education by creating a 'safe' learning environment? Here I think we can finally answer yes. It seems that the biggest problem the committee found at Hamilton was the unsupervised consumption of alcohol. The majority of the policy is dedicated to bringing every student within the school's grasp. Regulated social spaces, the elimination of privately owned residential societies and campus owned bars all are ideas aimed at controlling drinking at Hamilton. Is this a good idea? It may be. Drinking may be a disruptive influence at Hamilton that compromises its academic reputation, but that is not for me to judge. What is important to evaluate is whether or not the changes the committee advocates as solutions to the perceived problem will be effective.

The reality of the residential situation next year will be something like this: all students will live in college housing and the strict alcohol policy will be enforced. Will student stop drinking as much? It is naive to think so. Will there be more college supervised social functions? Probably a few more, but the difficulties involved with holding parties in designated social spaces will force many students off-campus to do their drinking. This will not happen at friend's houses and apartments, obviously, because such places will no longer exist. Instead it will be at bars. In fact, if I had the money to invest, I would build a large, fraternity-like bar in Clinton. Sadly, I do not. The result of this off-campus drinking will inevitably be more drinking and driving and less college supervision over alcohol use. Thus the policy will effectively backfire, unless further steps are taken.

A logical next step in this process would be for the school to ban students from having cars on campus. Everyone will live on the Hill anyway, and the cars only promote accidents. Is this a bad idea? Maybe not, once we have already gone this far, but it would serve to further alienate Hamilton students from the social realities of this country. I think it would be a difficult rule for the college to make because it would further isolate a campus with an already detached location.

To sum up, I recall one student's comment at the announcement on Saturday. He said something like, "if the social scene at Hamilton resembled what you want it to when I applied, I would not have come to this school." Sadly, that is the point of these changes. Hamilton wants a very different student body. Whether this future body of 'ideal' students will be more diverse, intelligent or interesting is anybody's guess. The committee's recommendations reflect Hamilton's investment in the 'potential' as opposed to the 'actual' student body. In the long run this may pay off, but in the meanwhile it holds the real students at Hamilton College to unrealistic and potentially dangerous standards.

Ian C. Bartrum '95

Students must get involved to make most of changes

To the editor:

This Saturday, a large portion of the student body and faculty were present in the Alumni Gym to hear the results of the Residential Life Study. I am glad that so many took the time to go, especially on a Saturday morning. After hearing the results, some of us were surprised, some pleased, and some very disappointed. I personally was pleased with the decisions of the Board of Trustees and the Committee. As a first year here at Hamilton, I have been a little disappointed at times with my decision to attend this school as I felt that the social aspects I wanted were not available. What I have seen the most here are those aspects presented by the fraternities and other private societies. While I believe that all private societies have the right to exist, I am glad the Committee has acknowledged the fact that more social options are needed to represent the entire student body, not just those who want to take part in private societies. It is clear that improvements are needed to make Hamilton a more respected and desired college, both academically and socially.

While I agreed with the results of the study, it concerned me to hear how the student body reacted. All questions and comments were appropriate and important, but not all were completely thought through. I am referring specifically to the demand for "concrete examples." I would like to remind the student body how difficult these decisions were to make. The Board of Trustees and the Committee had to make changes in our Residential Life situation. They insured that our views were represented by surveying us in the Residential Life Study. They wanted to inform us as a group of the results in order to be fair to the entire student body. If they had presented the results to only the fraternities, for example, the rest of us would be complaining that we were not all treated equitably. Nor could they give us any concrete details of what exactly the Residential Life situation would be like. If they had, we would cry out that they weren't listening to what we wanted as the "customers" (as we were referred to by one student) of Hamilton.

The purpose of the Residential Life study was to find a solution to improve Hamilton as a residential college, and therefore improve both the academic and social life of the students. There are 1600 students on campus, and only a third take part in the private societies. For some students, the social life at Hamilton revolves around the private societies, and for many, it is perceived to be a negative quality of the school. Because Hamilton is a residential college, it is necessary to provide a positive social life for *all* students. The changes suggested by the Committee are ideas intended to provide all students with more opportunities. They have not implemented nay definite changes; they have only suggested changes. It is up to us, the student body, to make those changes. We are the ones who must continue to live here. If we want to make it a place that we enjoy being at, it is necessary that we take part in all upcoming discussions, committees and task forces. We are the future of Hamilton; what we decided to do, or not to do, will have an impact on us and the reputation of Hamilton. I therefore encourage everyone to make an effort and get involved.

Kathleen S. Knaul, '98

Short and to the point

To the editor:

I don't understand the reason for the trustees' decision. Aren't there other ways to improve our academic reputation? Moreover, next year will not be enjoyable for many of us. In the long run this may be good, but in the short run, it isn't at all.

Justin Ledden '97

Albro's article paints false picture of RAs and Residential Life Study

To the editor:

Albro's article is an inaccurate portrayal of the RA position and the purpose of the Residential Life Study. Albro states that "students cannot trust their Resident Advisors because it is their duty to enforce the ridiculous rules laid down by the Administration." The rules laid down by the administration have a purpose, they are not arbitrary. If he was referring to the "alcohol policy," it should be understood that the policy is in compliance with New York State Law. Also, we represent a RA and advisee relationship and we can both attest to the fact that there is a significant amount of trust and respect within the relationship.

Being an RA does not mean that you have to be a police officer and students should not view their RA in this manner. The role of the RA is to balance and maintain the community environment. The RA job has many aspects: community builder; programmer; counselor; administrator; and limit setter. More specifically, the role of the limit setter (the role that Albro was referring to) serves a purpose, it is not accidental; it stems from a belief that students are mature, intelligent adults who are capable of regulating their own behavior. However, there are times when students do not use intelligent and mature judgement, and the RA is called upon to intervene. While the limit setter is a very important aspect of the job, the roles of counselor, programmer, and community builder are more often utilized.

Representing a current RA and candidate for the position, we do not believe that RA's are "asked to turn in their humanity and tolerance when they take the job." First, why would so many people apply for the position if this is what they were asked to do? This year 78 students are currently applying for the position and of the RA's eligible to reapply 18 of the 21 have chosen to do so. Second, I feel my tolerance and understanding of student concerns has increased within the realm of the RA position; it has helped rather than hurt my sense of humanity and tolerance.

Albro also states that the Administration is "more interested in their own agenda than the desires of the student body" and that they are in essence going to "remove the good times." This is completely unfounded. The Residential Life Study is the Administration's way of allowing more students to participate in the social aspects of the campus. If you remember correctly, students have been give many opportunities to integrate their opinions and concerns within the confines of the study; therefore they are not ignoring "the desires of the student body." The purpose of the Residential Life Study is to improve the co-curricular life of the campus for every student. Hamilton is a residential college, meaning students are required to live on campus all four years. The results of the study will ensure that the residential aspect of Hamilton College is a positive one for all.

Lastly, he states that the reforms are "unrealistic" and if they do come "into effect, the schools appeal will plummet and with it, its reputation for excellence." He, or anyone else, cannot predict the outcome of the study. It is obvious that students want both leisure and academics; the administration is trying to provide a level of excellence for all students, not just a select few, successfully mixing both leisure and academics. The changes are to promote excellence; we think that everyone should keep this in mind.

Tamara J. Scapicchio, '95
Kathleen S. Knaul, '98

Trustee's decision provides opportunity to shape the future

The hottest topic on campus is the residential life decision announced by the Trustees on Saturday, March 4. Many people are disappointed.

Fraternities, who can no longer use their houses, feel as though a large part of what they are has been stripped away and sororities are disappointed that they were not offered housing. Many are shocked that the Trustees have committed such a large amount of money to residential changes while other important issues loom in the background, under-funded. Others are enraged with the vague nature of the plans announced by Kevin Kennedy '70.

All of these concerns are valid. I empathize with all those unhappy. Initially, I had some similar reactions. However, there are other ways of looking at the situation. Change is easy to resist and incredibly difficult to embrace. But, without change progress can never be made.

The sweeping changes proposed by the Trustees have given us the opportunity to shape and define the atmosphere at Hamilton for the next century. Their vague nature provides us the with the opportunity to offer input and ensure that the specific nature of each change meets our needs.

Thus, I challenge the Hamilton Community to come together and resist its negative impulses. The Trustees and administrators have left a great deal open to discussion and influence. Hamilton students are driven an intelligent enough to take these changes, work with their positive aspects, and make Hamilton one of the most exciting, dynamic and groundbreaking institutions in the world.

Some of you may be thinking . . ."What positive aspects?" I urge you to try to look at the situation from outside your own experience. Look at

Oscar Leal

Random Noise

is as if you were a student accustomed to the status quo. Look at them as if you were a trustee or an incoming student.

The new program, with your help, could offer greater, more comfortable interaction with faculty, more housing options and a larger array of social alternatives. (From a society party in a social space, a night at the new pub, a dinner with distinguished guests at the Rogers estate, one of the increased number of campus events, a night of fine food prepared by you and a friend in one of the newly accessible kitchen spaces, to a quiet night in your newly refurbished dorm room watching a movie.) The academic world is watching Hamilton closely. Lets work hard to cooperate and make Hamilton a model school for all the world to admire. Attempts to foil the Trustees plans will leave all of us unhappy at a school crowed with turmoil and despair.

Remember, the Trustees have no reason to "destroy" Hamilton. They have, perhaps, more concern for this institution than anyone else. They are not paid for their time, they donate huge amounts of money, and try diligently to better their alma mater. These brilliant, successful men and women have given us monetary donations, valuable time and insight simply because they want Hamilton to be one of the greatest institutions of higher learning in the world. Isn't that what we all want? So, you see, the Trustees are no so different from us after all.

You are all right, there are problems with this proposal and it was presented in a domineering way. However, nothing is perfect. Let's not dwell on the negative. Lets pull together like we did in Albany and make Hamilton a more thrilling, dynamic institution bursting with enthusiasm. Together, we are more than capable of doing this.

Residential Life decision consolidates administrators' power over our lives

As a political science major, I feel compelled to classify the political system of this college into one of the traditional government types. Contrary to the innate preference of most people affiliated with the school, Hamilton College is clearly not democratic or representative in any way. Those in charge of the institution regularly make major decisions without the approval or even the consultation of the students or faculty. Curiously, the very people that decisions such as this affect most have the least control over them. While administrators make a relatively feeble attempt to pretend that certain students have some control over their own fates, it is obvious that projects of groups such as the Student Assembly (as well as the sundry student representatives on various committees) depend entirely on the whim of the administrator in charge of the relevant aspect of our lives. We could not even arrange for something as petty as allowing cable television due to the lack of permission from one of our many offices. This seems to me a rather strange way of doing business considering the students' position as the customers of Hamilton College but, since we are more or less a captive audience once enrolled here, apparently the school simply does not have to listen to our wishes. Perhaps we have some sort of authoritarian system or monarchy whose power ultimately rests in a small oligarchy of powerful people who do not answer to the students or faculty, namely, the trustees. However, in light of Saturday's events, I have to conclude that this campus is becoming a totalitarian establishment, ruled by a Politburo of trustees and regulated by a group of administrators that are completely alienated from the student body. These people have now consolidated their power through the reforms of the Residential Life Study, expanding their influence beyond our academic lives to solidify control over our private lives. This control does not apply only to members of student organizations such as private societies. Every student will now find that his or her social life is at the mercy of a group of unenlightened despots.

This transformation does not surprise me. In each of my four years at this school, I have witnessed maneuvers by the administration which aim to strengthen its strangle hold over every aspect of life on this campus. Whether it be harassing fraternities with arbitrary sanctions, threatening those seeking off-campus housing with the revocation of this right or the scandalous lack of due process that has characterized the school's judicial proceedings and major policy decisions (such as the Health Center closure, budget cuts and fraternity expulsions), these moves have all demonstrated the determination of our administrators to subjugate students to their will. When I arrived here at Hamilton, the students' right to do what they wanted in the privacy of their own room was relatively unquestioned. As demonstrated by the escalation of official invasions of privacy (especially this year) students increasingly cannot even hide from the administration in their own rooms. When we can no longer flee to separate houses and apartments, where can they not get to us?

Chris Albro

Guest Columnist

If the offices such as that of the Dean of Students, Student Activities, and especially Residential Life were filled with administrators that understood and cared about the feelings of students, then perhaps this trend would simply be alienating and not detrimental to students' everyday lives. However, nothing that I have witnessed during my years at Hamilton suggests that these bureaucrats have any idea who the average student and the average perspective student are. This is clearly demonstrated by the most bone-headed policy that the school has ever implemented, the alcohol policy. Virtually eliminating the ability to have parties on campus, while it is no doubt happily greeted by area bars, makes this school a significantly more boring and depressing place. Eliminating even the society option for diversion and allowing for only three social spaces is incredibly shortsighted. First of all, how can a campus of around 1600 students be expected to restrict their social activity to three spaces? This is ludicrous and is just asking for problems with students driving drunk home from bars and the type of alcoholism that results from having to hide in one's room to drink. Secondly, to assume that social activity can be planned and restricted to certain 'spaces' is absolutely contrary to every human impulse that I have ever known. In light of the bizarre delusions of the administration and trustees with regard to socializing, it is clear that the people who next year will have taken full power over the life of this school have a completely skewed and naive vision of what students want and need.

Under the control of these power-hungry bureaucrats, this school will be reduced from an academic institution to a plant of institutionalized academics. They will control the way you live, the way you eat, the way you socialize, and the way you study. In effect, they will control the way that you will live. This hardly seems an appropriate way of treating college students and teaching them to be independent thinkers and leaders. I, for one, am glad that my sentence is up next year so that I do not have to further subject myself to the whim of these wretched despots.

If you disagree with Residential Life decision, do something about it

It will come as no surprise to those of you who know me that I am thrilled by the decision that the trustees made and shared with us on Saturday. If anything, I wish they had arrived at this decision before. I would have relished the opportunity to live in a space like the Rogers Estate, fully aware that every student on campus had that same opportunity, regardless of sex, race, class, or sexual-orientation. It was high time that the school caught up with developments in the rest of the world and faced reality: the world is no longer strictly defined by the social connections one establishes at an elite school. Discrimination and exclusion are retrogressive. The world is defined, more and more, by what we know and what we do with that knowledge. The world is defined by an interesting maxim: put theory into practice. Let me explain.

I feel that I was part of the decision on Saturday. Why? Not because I filled in a survey. That still lets the powers that be interpret what I feel and think. That is not the same thing as telling them what you feel and why. When I arrived at Hamilton, I immediately realized that fraternities, and the world they represented, were not only unjust institutions but also attempted to homogenize our experience. Consequently, I fought to make the school aware that the world was changing and so should Hamilton. I pressured the administration to change what was an obviously iniquitous system that gave privileges to an already privileged group of people. I met various times with President Payne and later with President Tobin. I felt that if I wanted something done, I had to make sure it got done. I knew that I couldn't just sit back and watch the world go by. You don't let other people do things for you. You do them.

Why did I just torture you with that self-centered summary of part of my life at Hamilton? Well, I know most of you are not satisfied with the decision the trustees made, and, while I disagree with you, I don't think you should passively accept this decision, this imposition. Nonetheless, as it stands right now your inactivity, passivity, and silence puts us, you and I, in the same boat—we both agree with the result. Silence means tacit approval. If you really feel that this judgement was unsound, don't just sit back, drink a few beers and accept it: do something about it. I would suggest that you be constructive and carefully analyse what it is you are doing. If you burn a building, chances are you will alienate a vast majority of the community. If you scream at people, foolishly harassing those who you believe are partly responsible for this decision, you will also alienate a vast majority of the community. However, if you somehow plan a constructive protest (you decide what is the best strategy), explaining why another system is better for ALL Hamilton students, people may listen, maybe even the trustees.

Larry McKiernan

Guest Columnist

I would suggest that you be intelligent, visionary, and eloquent. Analyse your feelings and opinions to understand why you think and feel the way you think and feel. If your only answer is, "because there were good times and good parties" then you probably will not influence many people, and especially not those who are interested in academics at Hamilton. You have to realize that what is increasingly valued is your ability to think. If you sincerely believe that the previous system was conducive to positive intellectual and social discourse then make sure your views are known by many people. Be creative, be disruptive, be understood. As I currently interpret Hamilton's atmosphere I am sure that this decision will stand as it is, and the administration will know they can enforce virtually any plan they want upon you. Do you really want somebody else to run your life? Apparently, most of us do.

On Saturday, Kevin Kennedy constantly reiterated one point: this plan is a blueprint. Make him stand up to his words. Suggest options, even those that may give more influence to societies, if that is what you believe. Believe me, I will be on the other side arguing that a system that is equitable, decentralized, competitive, and challenging is dramatically better than the apathy that the fraternity system generated. Currently, your apathy is what is killing Hamilton's status quo. Fortunately, the trustees chose to disrupt that status quo and laid the conceptual foundation to what I see as a much more appealing Hamilton. However, that's my opinion. What's yours? Nobody will know unless you make it public. A healthy social and intellectual community thrives on dialogue and action. Show that you are willing to make Hamilton that community by constructively expressing your opinions. If you strive for self-reliance, for maintaining your houses, show it by engaging in the dialogue that is so desperately needed at Hamilton. Do not just sit back. Believe me, it's not a pretty sight and it will get you nowhere.